

The Daily News Digest

Wednesday, September 01, 2010

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DAILY NEWS DIGEST ARTICLES

September 1, 2010

Section I: Hydrofracking

More people need to learn about dangers of 'fracking' - Editorial

USA Today, 08/30/10

Summary: I read the article " 'Fracking' fractures N.Y. county" with a degree of disbelief. It was a well balanced handling of a polarizing issue. Yet, I was amazed how individuals can be so divided. How anyone can say fracking, the controversial method used to drill for natural gas, is "absolutely" environmentally safe, as a dairy farmer quoted in the article did? That statement indicates to me that he is misinformed or blinded by the vision of dollars rolling into his bank account (News, Aug. 24). Even more disturbing is that although information is easily accessible, some people are not reading it or are purposely ignoring it so they can stick to their point of view.

Section II: Texas Air

EPA rejects pollution permit system

Dallas Morning News, 09/01/10

Summary: The Environmental Protection Agency rejected the latest in a series of Texas air-pollution permit systems on Tuesday, this one dealing with new or expanded industrial plants. The EPA said the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's new source review program did not meet Clean Air Act requirements. The program is one of several in Texas that the EPA has rejected over the past year.

EPA rejects Texas approach to setting new plant emissions

Houston Chronicle, 08/31/10

Summary: Federal environmental regulators took aim at Texas' rules for air pollution for the third time in five months Tuesday, saying some aspects violate the Clean Air Act. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rejected pieces of a program known as New Source Review, which dictates when industrial plants must implement additional pollution controls. Under federal guidelines, expanding industrial plants calculate their emissions to determine whether they need new pollution controls.

Section III: Oil

Three Texas cities to see oil industry rallies today

Houston Chronicle, 08/31/10

Summary: Thousands of oil and gas industry supporters are set to rally in three Texas cities today to protest the administration's deep-water drilling moratorium and congressional proposals they say would cost jobs. The American Petroleum Institute organized gatherings in Houston, Port Arthur and Corpus Christi to galvanize opposition to lawmakers' plans to get rid of industry tax breaks and impose unlimited liability for oil spills. They also are taking aim at the administration's ban on deep-water drilling, first imposed in May in the wake of the blowout at BP's Macondo well and set to last until Nov. 30.

Drilling agency imposes conflict-of-interest rules

AP, 08/31/10

Summary: Scandalized by federal regulators who had sex with oil company executives and negotiated with them for jobs, the agency that oversees offshore drilling is imposing a first-ever ethics policy that bars inspectors from dealing with a company that employs a family member or personal friend. Michael Bromwich, head of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, says the new policy should help restore credibility to the beleaguered agency, formerly known as the Minerals Management Service. President Barack Obama has pledged to end the agency's "cozy relationship" with the oil industry. Besides the rule on family and friends, the new policy bars inspectors from work involving their former employers for two years.

Degraded oil in Mississippi Sound tests positive for dispersants, says lawyer

AL.com, 08/31/10

Summary: Lumpy, degraded oil collected in the Mississippi Sound has tested positive for several of the main ingredients in the Corexit dispersant used in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, according to scientists working for a New Orleans-based lawyer. Officials with the federal government and BP PLC have maintained throughout the oil spill that no dispersant products have been used near shorelines in Alabama or Mississippi.

1,900 checks, or about \$10 million, paid by new oil spill claims operation

AL.com, 08/31/10

Summary: As of Monday afternoon, the Gulf Coast Claims Facility -- which took over oil spill damage payments Aug. 23 from BP PLC -- had written about 1,900 checks for \$9.7 million. Almost 29,000 people had filed claims, according to the statistics.

Alabama leaders say they knew nothing about BP claims meeting

AL.com, 08/31/10

Summary: BP PLC's incoming CEO told reporters Sunday that the company would meet Monday with top state officials to confer about Alabama's oil spill damages — but state leaders said they knew nothing about it. When the news story appeared, “that was the first I'd heard of that,” Attorney General Troy King said Monday. Jeff Emerson, a spokesman for Gov. Bob Riley added: “We're not aware of any meeting.”

Section IV: Other

Rodríguez to address green issues today

El Paso Times, 09/01/10

Summary: The environment will be the topic of a community forum by Democrat state Senate candidate José Rodríguez. The meeting will deal with preserving the environment, alternative energy and green jobs. The meeting will be at 6 p.m. today at Democrat Unity Campaign Headquarters, 6430 Gateway East. Past meetings focused on education, healthcare and jobs. Rodríguez faces Republican Dan Chavez, a businessman and economics professor, in the Nov. 2 general election.

Water woes get state's attention

Austin American-Statesman, 09/01/10

Summary: The Texas attorney general has launched an investigation into the Kennedy Ridge Water Supply Corp. after an American-Statesman report Sunday detailed unexplained water rate increases in the low-income community in eastern Travis County. State lawmakers, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Travis County judge also are looking into the matter.

Assumption well blowout reviewed

The Advocate, 09/01/10

Summary: With an Assumption Parish wild well now under control, state agencies have begun to focus on environmental cleanup issues and inquiries into what caused the nearly two-week blowout, authorities said. The Louisiana departments of Environmental Quality, Agriculture and Forestry, and Natural Resources are forming a “cleanup response team” to develop a plan, Rodney Mallett, DEQ spokesman, said Tuesday.

Enbridge subcontractor let go over safety, documentation issues

MLive.com, 09/01/10

Summary: Enbridge Inc.'s main contractor on the efforts to clean up the recent oil spill on the Kalamazoo River let go a firm it was subcontracting with after allegations surfaced it was using undocumented workers and was not abiding by federal safety standards. Enbridge spokeswoman Terri Larson confirmed on Tuesday that Houston-based Garner Environmental Services terminated its agreement with Hallmark Industrial LLC, also of Texas, on Monday night after a Monday report in the Michigan Messenger.

Katrina's Traumatic Impact Still Felt by Youth

Epoch Times, 08/31/10

Summary: After suffering through the nation's second deadliest natural disaster in history, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many youth in New Orleans still struggle mentally and emotionally. With additional job loss and environmental damage in the region due to the BP oil spill, the toll has become even heavier. The emotional impact on youth has been showing in elementary and secondary school performance. After the storm, the number of students who were expelled or suspended from school rose to 17 times the national average, according to Juvenile and Justice Program of Louisiana Director Dana Kaplan.

Fight to ban lead in fishing tackle continues

Edmond Sun, 08/31/10

Summary: Politicians, anglers and environmentalists are taking sides over a petition to ban potentially toxic lead in fishing tackle. On Friday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ruled against considering a petition from the Center of Biological Diversity and other environmental groups to ban the production and distribution of lead hunting ammunition. Although many conservatives and Second Amendment advocates hailed the move as a victory, the EPA is still waiting to determine if it will take up the second part of the proposal that would outlaw lead in popular fishing sinkers.

Nissan starts selling all-electric Leaf sedan today

USA Today, 08/31/10

Summary: At long last, Nissan begins taking actual orders today for the first next-generation fully electric car from a major automaker, the Leaf. More than 18,000 people who plunked down \$99 to stay on the reservations list will have first crack at turning their interest into an actual order for the all-electric, five-seat car. Orders will be taken online and Nissan is still taking reservations on Leaf's web site. Even though now you can actually pay for one, deliveries won't start until December. The car has a range of about 100 miles per charge. Nissan has been having inspectors make home visits and taking other steps to make sure customers will be able to recharge at home and likely be happy with the car.

Have environmentalists lost the climate-change fight?

USA Today, 08/31/10

Summary: Environmental groups, which failed to get a climate-change bill passed this year in the U.S. Senate, are having trouble getting their message heard on the campaign trail. They tried to sound the alarm that they're losing the fight at two events last week in Wisconsin -- one dubbed a "Carnivoil" -- but didn't draw enough people to fill a high school gymnasium, reports The Washington Post's David Fahrenthold. That's quite a contrast from a year ago when the House of Representatives passed a sweeping bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions despite massive lobbying from the oil and gas industry.

Electricity storage capability taking massive leap

Examiner, 08/31/10

Summary: The senior director of marketing and government affairs for SuperPower, Trudy Lehner, announced today that it is one of three organizations being funded by the US Department of Energy (DOE) to co-develop advanced Superconducting Magnetic Energy Storage systems (SMES). The funding of \$4.2 million is coming as a grant from the DOE's bold new arm, the Advanced Research Project Agency -- Energy (ARPA-E), to three organizations working together, ABB, Brookhaven National Labs and SuperPower, a manufacturer of superconducting wire, together with SuperPower's R&D group at the University of Houston.

Cypress Creek Basin survey is completed

Marshall News Messenger, 08/31/10

Summary: Caddo Lake Watershed stakeholders met Monday afternoon for the last time with Epsey Consultants Inc. as it has concluded its survey and modeling of the Cypress Creek Basin to best identify the sources and solutions to pollution there. "I think it went well. I think the stakeholders provided concerns for data used in the model," said Lee Thomas, team leader for Northeast Texas Municipal Water District and coordinator of the Watershed Protection Plan for the Cypress Creek Basin.

Beauty in the Barren

Pittsburg Morning Sun, 08/30/10

Summary: Most reporters and photographers stressed the dismal, desolate aspects of the Tar Creek Superfund Site in Oklahoma, around Picher and Carden. Vaughn Wascovich, however, has literally focused on finding beauty in the landscape in a photo series he call "The Tar Creek Project." These photos are on exhibit now through Sept. 30 in the Harry Krug Gallery, Porter Hall, Pittsburg State University.

Pedal power takes off as exercise produces electricity

USA Today, 08/30/10

Summary: Pedal power is gaining traction as thousands of bikes and elliptical machines are retrofitted to produce electricity. Gyms are using sweat equity to help power their facilities. A Brooklyn eatery uses it to make smoothies. Female inmates at a Phoenix jail pedal to power their TV to watch soap operas. Actor Ed Begley Jr. rides a bike to run his toaster. "Business is really taking off," says Jay Whelan, CEO of The Green Revolution, a Connecticut-based company that retrofits bikes for spinning classes. Since April 2009, he has added devices to nearly 1,000 bikes at 60 gyms that convert the direct current created by pedaling into alternating current to be sent to the power grid. Most of his customers are on the West or East Coast or in Canada. The average cost: about \$1,000 per bike.

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More people need to learn about dangers of 'fracking'

I read the article " 'Fracking' fractures N.Y. county" with a degree of disbelief. It was a well balanced handling of a polarizing issue. Yet, I was amazed how individuals can be so divided. How anyone can say fracking, the controversial method used to drill for natural gas, is "absolutely" environmentally safe, as a dairy farmer quoted in the article did? That statement indicates to me that he is misinformed or blinded by the vision of dollars rolling into his bank account (News, Aug. 24).

Even more disturbing is that although information is easily accessible, some people are not reading it or are purposely ignoring it so they can stick to their point of view.

Take the time to study fracking. That would make a statement such as "fracking is absolutely safe" too embarrassing to make because of the absurdity.

Roger L. Vince; Macedonia, Ohio

Neighbors vs. neighbors

Your story on natural gas fracturing and the fractures among friends is well-known by our family in rural Wisconsin. Years ago, we entered into an agreement with a reputable quarry operation that spent several years preparing for a permit application. Shortly after the permit became public, long-standing friends refused to speak with us, some members left our church and we were publicly accused of being poor Christians.

Even our children were shunned by friends whose families were against the quarry. Our promises of never doing anything that would cause another family distress have fallen on the deaf ears of those who think profits drive all decisions.

It has been a difficult journey and will end only after years of safe, quiet quarry operations dispels all the myths and stories that were presented. Perhaps we will then be forgiven while we also try to forgive.

Glyn Thorman; Osceola, Wis.

Effects on land, water

A controversial method of natural gas drilling known as "fracking" has pitted communities in New York against each other, and for good reason. Proponents of fracturing, who in the case highlighted in USA TODAY's article are dairy farmers, support it because profits from leasing their land and royalties could help them get their farms out of debt. Unfortunately, this is shortsighted and has the possibility of ruining the very farms they are attempting to salvage.

"Fracking" involves injecting water, sand and chemicals into the earth with the intention of releasing the natural gas trapped deep inside shale deposits.

In areas where fracking has been used, such as Colorado, Wyoming and West Virginia, the chemical stew can wind up bubbling to the surface or leach into drinking water. There also have been reports of it creating flammable water and unusable land.

Michael Bowen; Cheektowaga, N.Y.

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EPA rejects pollution permit system

12:00 AM CDT on Wednesday, September 1, 2010

By RANDY LEE LOFTIS / The Dallas Morning News
rloftis@dallasnews.com

The Environmental Protection Agency rejected the latest in a series of Texas air-pollution permit systems on Tuesday, this one dealing with new or expanded industrial plants.

The EPA said the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's new source review program did not meet Clean Air Act requirements. The program is one of several in Texas that the EPA has rejected over the past year.

Texas officials say their programs are legal and have resulted in lower emissions.

Tensions between the EPA and Texas have led to lawsuits by the state and outcries from Gov. Rick Perry and Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott, who have called the EPA actions an illegal and politically motivated power grab.

EPA Regional Administrator Al Armendariz says the moves are necessary to protect public health and to ensure the state's compliance with federal law.

New source review is required by the federal Clean Air Act and is usually administered by states. EPA officials said last September that they intended to disapprove Texas' version.

Federal law requires detailed reviews and state-of-the-art pollution controls to make sure new industrial plants or major expansions do not degrade local air quality.

As with several other Texas programs, the EPA said Texas' new source review system did not guarantee that emissions remained below acceptable levels. The EPA also says Texas does not allow enough public scrutiny of pending permits.

Texas rejects those claims and says its system is a model for the country.

The EPA said it will work with industries and Texas officials to make sure companies can obtain permits that comply with federal law.



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EPA rejects Texas approach to setting new plant emissions

Agency says estimates can't be used to set limits

By **MATTHEW TRESAUGUE**
HOUSTON CHRONICLE
Aug. 31, 2010, 11:57PM

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Federal environmental regulators took aim at Texas' rules for air pollution for the third time in five months Tuesday, saying some aspects violate the Clean Air Act.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rejected pieces of a program known as New Source Review, which dictates when industrial plants must implement additional pollution controls.

Under federal guidelines, expanding industrial plants calculate their emissions to determine whether they need new pollution controls.

Call for 'real data'

The Texas rules, however, allow new plants — which are not included in the federal rules - to use estimates to set emissions limits. If the caps are set too high, that will make it easier for plants to expand later, said Al Armendariz, regional administrator for the EPA.

"We have confidence in real data, instead of the way the state of Texas does it, which is not based on actual emissions," he said.

Armendariz said the Texas program also falls short of federal standards for monitoring emissions. What's more, the state's rules don't require plants to include all pollution sources when setting limits.

The ruling, however, will not require companies to seek new permits or shut down, though they might see additional restrictions on emissions, he said.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which issues permits on the EPA's behalf, defended its program, saying it meets the federal requirements.

The commission also said in a statement that the state's air quality improved under the rejected program.

Environmentalists, in turn, praised the EPA's move, saying it could have "serious implications" for a number of coal plants that received or are seeking permits under the state's "watered-down" New Source Review program.

Abbott challenges

Neil Carman, an air quality expert with the Sierra Club's Lone Star chapter, said the EPA's latest decision is "an additional and much-needed step to protect our health."

The EPA previously struck down a Texas program that let industrial plants avoid some permitting procedures and the state's use of so-called flexible permits, which the federal agency says establish unenforceable emissions caps at refineries and other plants.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott has asked the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in separate petitions to block the EPA from rejecting the two permitting programs.

[matthew.tresaugue@chron](#)

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Three Texas cities to see oil industry rallies today

Opponents of drilling ban plan to show their displeasure

By JENNIFER A. DLOUHY Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle

Aug. 31, 2010, 10:51PM

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EVENT INFO

- **What:** Rally for Jobs organized by the American Petroleum Institute
- **When:** Doors open at 10:30 a.m. today. The event runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **Where:** George R. Brown Convention Center, downtown
- **For more info:** www.rallyforjobs.org

WASHINGTON — Thousands of oil and gas industry supporters are set to rally in three Texas cities today to protest the administration's deep-water drilling moratorium and congressional proposals they say would cost jobs.

The American Petroleum Institute organized gatherings in Houston, Port Arthur and Corpus Christi to galvanize opposition to lawmakers' plans to get rid of industry tax breaks and impose unlimited liability for oil spills.

They also are taking aim at the administration's ban on deep-water drilling, first imposed in May in the wake of the blowout at BP's Macondo well and set to last until Nov. 30.

Similar rallies are planned over the next two weeks in Ohio, Illinois, New Mexico and Colorado.

The rallies will take place as lawmakers head back to the nation's capital after their traditional monthlong August recess. They also come two months before voters head to the polls in November's congressional elections.

"As Congress is now grappling with policies that can impact our industry and the overall economy, we want to be sure there's recognition that energy is really the backbone of the American economy," API's executive vice president, Martin Durbin, said.

More than three dozen organizations are participating in the rally, including business coalitions such as the Chamber of Commerce, and oil and gas industry groups, such as the Independent Petroleum Association of America and the International Association of Drilling Contractors.

Houston speakers include Carroll Robinson, chairman of the Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce, former Shell USA president John Hofmeister and Minerva Perez, host of the PBS show *Latina Voices*.

5,000 expected

API officials said they expect at least 5,000 to attend the local event at George R. Brown Convention Center. That includes workers from some Houston-based companies, including Conoco-Phillips, where roughly 200 employees volunteered to attend, spokeswoman Nancy Turner said.

ConocoPhillips and Chevron employees who participate in the rally are scheduled to ride on transportation provided by API.

Shell Oil Co. is providing transportation from some locations, but employee participation is voluntary, spokesman Kelly Op De Weegh said.

"By standing alongside industry colleagues, individuals can communicate the absolute importance of this country's domestic energy resources, jobs and economic development," Op De Weegh said.

'AstroTurf' events

Environmental advocates say the rallies are nothing more than institutionally driven "AstroTurf" events masquerading as spontaneous grass-roots campaigns, designed to show the industry's political strength.

"These guys know that there's never going to be a rally in favor of oil unless they're organizing it," said Kert Davies, a research director for Greenpeace. "The real objective here is to send a political message on taking on the oil industry - that you're not going to take on the oil industry without consequence."

But Durbin said participants are still voters - both from inside and outside of industry - who are "engaged on these issues who understand we need to have reasonable policies to continue producing the oil and natural gas we need."

Preserving tax incentives

One of the API top targets is the Obama administration's proposal to eliminate a number of tax incentives long used by the industry - a plan that would let the government hold on to an additional \$36.5 billion from fiscal 2011 through fiscal 2020.

Although Congress rejected a similar request last year and has been cool to many of those ideas recently, at least one proposal is gaining traction. The Senate is to vote on Sept. 14 on a bill that would bar the five largest U.S. oil companies from taking a domestic manufacturing deduction that lets them cut their taxable income by 6 percent. The initiative, sponsored by Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., would still allow other industries and smaller oil companies to take the deduction.

Industry officials also are trying to combat policies advanced as a result of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. One, pushed by top Senate Democrats, would do away with a current \$75 million cap on the economic and natural resources damages companies have to pay for oil spills.

jennifer.dlouhy@chron.com

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hillcountry777 wrote:

I love all these high minded people who declare that oil is bad and we must immediately do away with it. You know, like the simpleton in the WH. These are the same people who would be screaming bloody murder if gas went up \$1 per gallon and that would only be a start. Food would go up, electricity would skyrocket, plastic would soar, etc. Just what would you folks have us hold our society together with?? Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it.

9/1/2010 5:53:35 AM

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Menschken wrote:

Its a JOBS Rally, you know the thing that puts bread on the table that people work to earn, the opposite of the welfare state. Jobs have a lot to do with why Texas is in the Black rather than the Red like the welfare states.

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Drilling agency imposes conflict-of-interest rules

By **MATTHEW DALY** Associated Press Writer © 2010 The Associated Press

Aug. 31, 2010, 2:42PM

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WASHINGTON — Scandalized by federal regulators who had sex with oil company executives and negotiated with them for jobs, the agency that oversees offshore drilling is imposing a first-ever ethics policy that bars inspectors from dealing with a company that employs a family member or personal friend.

Michael Bromwich, head of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, said the new policy should help restore credibility to his beleaguered agency, which was widely criticized under its former name — the Minerals Management Service — for being too close with oil and gas companies.

President Barack Obama and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar have pledged to end the agency's "cozy relationship" with industry and slow the revolving door between government and the energy industry.

Under the new policy, agency employees must notify a supervisor about any potential conflict of interest and step aside when inspections or other official duties involve a company that employs a family member or close personal friend.

Inspectors who join the agency from the oil industry cannot perform inspections or other work involving their former employers for two years.

The new policy, which takes effect immediately, comes after a series of jaw-dropping reports documenting the close relationship between agency workers and energy company representatives.

In May, the Interior Department's acting inspector general found that MMS employees in the Lake Charles, La., office accepted meals, football tickets, hunting trips and other gifts from the oil and gas companies they were regulating. In at least one case, an inspector admitted using crystal methamphetamine and said he might have been under the influence of the drug the next day at work.

A separate 2008 inspector general report singled out workers in the agency's Lakewood, Colo., office for having sexual relationships with energy company executives and accepting gifts from them.

Mary Kendall, Interior's acting inspector general, said her biggest concern was the ease with which drilling agency employees moved between industry and government. Inspectors and oil company workers have often known one another since childhood, and their relationships took precedence over their jobs, Kendall said.

The new policy is directed toward the most clear-cut conflicts of interest and acknowledges that drilling regulators often live near rig workers and supervisors they see in the field. The guidelines don't require recusal in all those situations, as long as the neighbors have limited personal knowledge of each other and only share general conversations.

In a memo to the drilling agency's 1,700 employees, Bromwich acknowledged that the new policy responds to widespread criticism. But he said it was a significant reform that "underscores the importance of independence, objectivity and the absence of real or apparent bias on the part of any of our employees in the discharge of their duties."

An investigator with the Washington-based Project on Government Oversight, Mandy Smithberger, called the ethics policy long overdue. She also said it should be expanded to other agencies within the Interior Department and high-ranking officials in the agency's Washington headquarters.

Bromwich, a lawyer and former inspector general at the Justice Department, has pledged a lifetime ban on working in the energy industry, but Smithberger said a more formal policy restricting political appointees from working in the industry is needed.

At least two former MMS directors have served as president of the National Ocean Industries Association, an offshore energy trade group. Randall Luthi, who was MMS director from 2007 to 2009, took over the industry post in March, replacing Tom Fry, who had been president of the group since 2000. Fry headed the drilling agency during the Clinton administration.



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Degraded oil in Mississippi Sound tests positive for dispersants, says lawyer

Published: Tuesday, August 31, 2010, 5:00 AM



Ben Raines, Press-Register



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(Photo credit Jerry Moran\Native Orleanian)

This weathered oil was encountered in the Mississippi Sound near Biloxi on August 9. Scientific sampling revealed the presence of three of the primary ingredients of the Corexit dispersant applied to oil from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Federal officials report that no dispersants have been used since July 19, and have maintained throughout the spill that none of the chemicals were used in Alabama or Mississippi state waters.

Lumpy, degraded oil collected in the Mississippi Sound has tested positive for several of the main ingredients in the Corexit dispersant used in connection with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, according to scientists working for a New Orleans-based lawyer.

Officials with the federal government and BP PLC have maintained throughout the oil spill that no dispersant products have been used near shorelines in Alabama or Mississippi.

"It is difficult to comment on testing conducted by third parties," BP spokeswoman Dawn Patience wrote in an e-mail. "Throughout the response period, we have worked hand-in-hand and under the direction of the Coast Guard and EPA on the use of dispersants."

Marco Kaltofen, part of the group of scientists who found the oil in Mississippi Sound, said it was impossible to determine when the dispersant had been applied to the oil. Results from the tests, which were conducted in a Colorado laboratory, indicated the oil was from the Deepwater Horizon well, he said.

"I consider this to be very interesting scientifically, as few samples detect dispersant, much less three of their major ingredients in the same sample," said Kaltofen.

The material was collected by a group of scientists working for attorney Stuart Smith, who is representing the Louisiana-based United Commercial Fisherman's Association and the Louisiana Environmental Action Network in a potential lawsuit regarding damage from the oil spill. The group found the oil about a mile north of Horn Island on Aug. 9.

"EPA samples found only one indication of dispersant near shore in Louisiana. That location was sampled several times with no other detection," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency spokeswoman Terri White said in a Monday e-mail. "There is no authorization to apply any dispersant at this time. If anyone has information about this, they need to report it immediately so it can be investigated and referred to law enforcement."

Jerry Moran, a New Orleans-based photographer who accompanied the group to document the sampling effort, said that the material looked unlike anything he'd seen during months of photographing the spill.

"We saw birds diving over a patch of oil. I'd never seen it that thick before. It looked like cauliflower. I had never seen it that texture before," Moran said. "There was a rainbow sheen around us, a really thick, colorful sheen."

Press-Register reporters encountered a similar material — strangely textured oil with a pronounced sheen — in Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound several times in July and early August. The day before Moran's group found the dispersant and oil mix, the Press-Register documented oil in a marsh on Horn Island.

BP and federal officials said that dispersants have not been used in the Gulf since July 19.

Smith, the lawyer who funded Kaltofen's sampling expedition, discounted the notion that dispersants had not been used near shore.

"I personally saw C-130s applying dispersants from my hotel room in the Florida Panhandle. They were spraying directly adjacent to the beach right at dusk," said Smith. "Fishermen I've talked to say they've been sprayed. This idea they are not using this stuff near the coast is nonsense."

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1,900 checks, or about \$10 million, paid by new oil spill claims operation

Published: Tuesday, August 31, 2010, 11:22 AM Updated: Tuesday, August 31, 2010, 11:22 AM



Dan Murtaugh, Press-Register



(Press-Register/Bill Starling)

Oil spill claims czar Ken Feinberg walks away from an Alabama State Trooper helicopter which landed at Zirlott Park next to the Bayou La Batre Community Center Saturday, Aug. 21, 2010. Feinberg visited the Southern Alabama fishing community Saturday as part of his efforts to educate the region effected by the oil spill prior to his takeover of the claims process on Aug. 23.

MOBILE, Alabama -- As of Monday afternoon, the Gulf Coast Claims Facility -- which took over oil spill damage payments Aug. 23 from BP PLC -- had written about 1,900 checks for \$9.7 million.

Almost 29,000 people had filed claims, according to the statistics.

By comparison, eight days after BP started its claims process, about 2,700 claims had been filed, and the company had written 122 checks worth \$631,000, according to data from BP.

By the time BP handed over the process to Ken Feinberg, an independent administrator agreed upon by the company and President Barack Obama, more than 144,000 claims had been filed, and BP had paid out nearly \$400 million, according to records provided by the company.

Feinberg said Monday that nearly 20,000 claims filed by individual workers had been reviewed, and that all would receive by today either a check for lost earnings or a message indicating what information they need to file to complete their claim.

Amy Weiss, a spokeswoman for the claims operation, said daily stats would be posted online at **www.gulfcoastclaimsfacility.com**. Monday's stats can be found **here**.

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Alabama leaders say they knew nothing about BP claims meeting

Published: Tuesday, August 31, 2010, 8:00 AM Updated: Tuesday, August 31, 2010, 12:49 PM



George Altman, Press-Register



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(AP Photo/Dave Martin)

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley, front right, addresses Bob Dudley, left, incoming chairman of BP, during a meeting of the Southern Governor's Association meeting in Hoover, Ala., Sunday, Aug. 29, 2010. Meeting with the governors were also National Incident Commander Ret. Coast Guard Cmdt. Thad Allen, center and Kenneth Feinberg who manages the oil spill claims fund.

BP PLC's incoming CEO told reporters Sunday that the company would meet Monday with top state officials to confer about Alabama's oil spill damages — but state leaders said they knew nothing about it.

When the news story appeared, "that was the first I'd heard of that," Attorney General Troy King said Monday.

Jeff Emerson, a spokesman for Gov. Bob Riley added: "We're not aware of any meeting."

Company officials said later Monday that the sit-down with BP's Bob Dudley was expected to take place in September, although uncertainty was still apparent.

"Scheduling conflicts amongst a variety of parties resulted in that meeting being moved back to the 13th" of

September, company spokesman Justin Saia said Monday. "We're happy to meet as soon as possible."

Monday afternoon, another BP spokesman, Ray Melick, told the Press-Register that there could be scheduling conflicts for Sept. 13, and no definite date had been set.

Earlier this month, Alabama made a \$148 million claim against BP as a result of the spill, and King filed lawsuits against the company seeking unspecified damages. BP officials have said both issues would be on the meeting agenda.

Dudley, who is scheduled to become BP's CEO Oct. 1, said Sunday at the Southern Governors' Association meeting in Hoover that, "BP is going to meet with state officials tomorrow, along with representatives of the attorney general's office, to look at the claim and try to understand more the basis of the claim and what (are the) next steps."

King said Monday, "I don't know what he's talking about."

Saia said the company had tried to set up the meeting as early as Monday, but was unable to do so.

According to Saia, the eventual meeting will mainly focus on the lawsuit, but the state's damages claim could also come up. He characterized it as an "introductory meeting between all parties."

Dudley said Sunday that the state's lawsuits, which King filed over Riley's objections, could delay BP from acting on the state's damages claim. The claim and lawsuit were both filed on Aug. 12.

BP wants to resolve claims faster, and with fewer court battles, than took place after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, Dudley said.

"We hadn't even really read the claim before the lawsuit came. I mean, it was that quick," Dudley said. "I don't think that was the ideal way for us to evaluate a claim."

King said he did not "rush to file a lawsuit," noting that the oil spill began more than four months ago.

"This didn't happen last Tuesday," he said. "They've had plenty of time to pay claims and to prove themselves responsible, and instead what they've proven is, they've got a track record of broken promises."

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Rodríguez to address green issues today

by Daniel Borunda / El Paso Times

Posted: 09/01/2010 12:00:00 AM MDT

The environment will be the topic of a community forum by Democrat state Senate candidate José Rodríguez.

The meeting will deal with preserving the environment, alternative energy and green jobs. The meeting will be at 6 p.m. today at Democrat Unity Campaign Headquarters, 6430 Gateway East. Past meetings focused on education, healthcare and jobs.

Rodríguez faces Republican Dan Chavez, a businessman and economics professor, in the Nov. 2 general election.

Advertisement

Water woes get state's attention

Kennedy Ridge rate increases now under investigation.

By **Suzannah Gonzales**

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Updated: 5:25 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1, 2010

Published: 10:40 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2010

The Texas attorney general has launched an investigation into the Kennedy Ridge Water Supply Corp. after an American-Statesman report Sunday detailed unexplained water rate increases in the low-income community in eastern Travis County. State lawmakers, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Travis County judge also are looking into the matter.

Many residents have struggled to pay rising water bills, which have exceeded \$300 a month in some cases. Some homes have been without water for weeks.

State Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin, called the problems in Kennedy Ridge Estates a "failure of the state to provide protections on the front end. ... This is a ridiculous situation, and we are in the process of looking at what can be done."

A spokesman for Attorney General Greg Abbott said Tuesday that he couldn't comment on the investigation. State Rep. Dawwna Dukes, D-Austin, said the attorney general should look into possible violations of deceptive trade practice laws or related statutes.

Acting board President Carmen Ayala declined to comment Tuesday on any investigation.

The corporation owes tens of thousands of dollars to the company it buys water from. Details of that debt are shrouded in a confidentiality agreement between the corporation and SouthWest Water Co., which owns the company that supplies water to Kennedy Ridge.

The state environmental commission has only appellate authority over the corporation's rates. However, a spokesman said the commission will contact Hornsby Bend Utility Co. — the SouthWest Water Co.-owned company that Kennedy Ridge buys groundwater and wastewater treatment services from — to request copies of Kennedy Ridge Water Supply Corp.'s billing records to determine whether there are any billing issues over which the commission might have jurisdiction.

The commission also proposes performing a so-called consolidation assessment, which would explore the possibility of another utility providing service, according to the spokesman.

In addition, the commission proposes increasing its financial, managerial and technical assistance to Kennedy Ridge Water Supply Corp., which would include training Kennedy Ridge board members on management, rate and collection issues. At the commission's direction, a contractor has attended board meetings of the water supply corporation to provide help; the contractor has made three visits to the water supply corporation since March, the spokesman said.

Travis County commissioners have no oversight role for the water supply corporation. But County Judge Sam Biscoe said Monday that he would put the Kennedy Ridge Water Supply Corp. on the agenda of next Tuesday's Commissioners Court meeting. He said he hopes to learn from the county's legal staff what authority commissioners might have to intervene.

Biscoe also said county staffers would investigate the matter, and if they discover possible criminal violations, officials would report those to the Travis County sheriff's office and district attorney. Commissioner Ron Davis of Precinct 1, where Kennedy Ridge is located, said he didn't know whether the

county could take action.

"We're not in the utility business. Period," Davis said.

Biscoe and Davis said they were unaware of the problems in Kennedy Ridge before reading Sunday's American-Statesman. When he served as commissioner of Precinct 1, Biscoe secured a \$500,000 federal grant and \$100,000 from the county to install water and sewer lines, among other improvements. Davis takes credit for getting about \$1 million in federal and state grants for the community.

Kennedy Ridge Water Supply Corp. was founded in 1991. Sixty-eight households were connected by 1993, and new water and wastewater lines were installed by 2005. The corporation now provides service to about 169 water and wastewater connections, according to the state environmental commission.

Recalling a cold day in December 2004 when he turned on a Kennedy Ridge faucet and saw water flowing, Davis said tears streamed from his eyes.

"I hope that no one should be without water. That was the whole point," Davis said Monday. "That was my whole mission."

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Assumption well blowout reviewed

Cleanup, cause considered

- By [DAVID J. MITCHELL](#)
- Advocate River parishes bureau
- Published: Sep 1, 2010 - Page: 3B

[Comments \(0\)](#)

With an Assumption Parish wild well now under control, state agencies have begun to focus on environmental cleanup issues and inquiries into what caused the nearly two-week blowout, authorities said.

The Louisiana departments of Environmental Quality, Agriculture and Forestry, and Natural Resources are forming a “cleanup response team” to develop a plan, Rodney Mallett, DEQ spokesman, said Tuesday.

Among the issues the plan would address is what to do with sugar cane the blowout killed or rendered unusable over a wide area and whether the affected cane can be burned for disposal, DEQ and agriculture officials said.

Meanwhile, DNR and Louisiana State Police are looking into what caused the Mantle Oil and Gas LLC well to blow, spokesmen with those agencies said.

Mantle Oil of Friendswood, Texas, is the well operator and is legally responsible for cleanup.

The 7,200-foot-deep exploratory well blew early on Aug. 11 and sprayed a geyser of oil, gas, brine, sand and other substances skyward. The well stopped on its own Aug. 24, possibly from filling with sand or by depleting itself, Mantle Oil officials have speculated.

Since then, contractors have installed a new blowout preventer, pumped in water and drilling muds to control the well and want to plug it from the surface, Mantle officials have said.

John Walther, state Department of Agriculture and Forestry director of emergency management, also said his department has asked the U.S. Food and Drug Administration whether sugar cane contaminated at any level by the blowout can be used for human consumption.

“We don’t know if there is an acceptable tolerance or a zero tolerance. That is what we’re asking right now,” Walther said.

A major stakeholder in the well, Grand Gulf Energy Ltd., has also announced its own third-party

review of the blowout and ongoing operations.

Grand Gulf has said it plans to drill three wells in the area to tap into the Napoleonville Salt Dome.

Sugar-cane farmers have an agricultural exemption from DEQ burning restrictions to clear their fields, Walther said.

But if cane doused with oil and other materials cannot be burned, it could present added disposal costs for Mantle Oil.

Walther said sugar cane produces about 30 to 40 tons of organic material per acre and needs to be removed so farmers can resume agricultural activities.

Mantle and Grand Gulf have said they have insurance that should largely cover cleanup costs.

Patrick Courreges, DNR communications director, said the agency plans to issue a compliance order this week for information from Mantle Oil.

Courreges said the order will lay out specific information that DNR engineers want from Mantle Oil so they can determine to the best of their ability “what happened down that well.”

What DNR officials learn could lead to an amended compliance order seeking more information or possibly fines if any violations are found, Courreges said.

Also, a report on a State Police investigation into what happened is expected in the coming weeks.

Trooper Bryan Zeringue, spokesman for State Police Troop C, said that at this point there is no indication any criminal charges are going to arise from that report.

But he added it appears “some administrative penalties” will be issued. He declined to comment further before the report was finished.

Grand Gulf said on Monday that Mantle Oil has informed the company that the blown-out well can be plugged and abandoned from the surface without a relief well.

The relief well by Monday was at 3,800 feet deep and contractors were changing its path to use it as a replacement for the blowout, Grand Gulf said.

James Trimble, Grand Gulf managing director based in Houston, referred calls to Mantle Oil Tuesday.

Mantle Oil officials did not return messages on Monday and Tuesday.

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Enbridge subcontractor let go over safety, documentation issues

Published: Wednesday, September 01, 2010, 12:08 AM

Updated: Wednesday, September 01, 2010, 12:14 AM



Chris Killian | Special to the Kalamazoo...



Jonathon Gruenke | Kalamazoo Gazette

Oil flows through the Kalamazoo River on both sides of an oil containment boom in July in Calhoun County's Emmett Township.

MARSHALL — Enbridge Inc.'s main contractor on the efforts to clean up the recent **oil spill on the Kalamazoo River** let go a firm it was subcontracting with after allegations surfaced it was using undocumented workers and was not abiding by federal safety standards.

Enbridge spokeswoman Terri Larson confirmed on Tuesday that Houston-based Garner Environmental Services terminated its agreement with Hallmark Industrial LLC, also of Texas, on Monday night after a Monday report in the Michigan Messenger.

The report said that hundreds of Hallmark workers were undocumented and were working in unsafe conditions, working 12 to 14 hour shifts, seven days a week, and getting paid in cash.

"They made that decision independently," Larson said of Garner, noting that Enbridge has "no reason to be concerned" about Garner's ability to perform the cleanup work, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has told Enbridge must be wrapped up by Sept. 27.

Calls made by the Gazette to Garner and Hallmark seeking comment were not returned.

Photos of the worksite provided by the Messenger, an online news and public policy website, to the EPA prompted the agency to contact Enbridge to make sure the company was following all safety regulations, said Mark Durno, the EPA's deputy incident commander for the spill response.

In some of the photos, workers were seen in so-called "clean zones" wearing oil-covered protective gear. In others, workers wearing the same oil-contaminated gear were seen next to food and water.

"We take health and safety very seriously," Durno said. "You don't want to track contamination away from the cleanup site. It's pretty common sense stuff."

Enbridge has complied with an EPA order to re-educate its workers and those employed by its contractors on safety issues, Durno said.

"We're on top of it and Enbridge is on top of it," he said.

Although all the more than 1,700 workers on the river have valid Social Security numbers, the EPA contacted the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, office in Detroit to make them aware of the allegations of undocumented workers on the cleanup, Durno said.

Durno said it was too early to speculate as to whether Hallmark's exit from the cleanup effort will compromise Enbridge's ability to complete the cleanup work by EPA's deadline.

"If we feel like they're slipping, we'll get involved," he said. "We'll keep an eye on it."

Larson said that Enbridge requires that all firms it contracts or subcontracts with must follow all state and federal labor laws. Garner has been on the river since the first few days after the July 26 spill and has been involved in shoreline and riverbank cleanup work, she said.

The company has worked for Enbridge in the past on spill cleanup responses in Oklahoma and Texas, she said.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Mark Schauer, a vocal critic of Enbridge since the spill, which released 1 million gallons of crude oil into the river, on Tuesday called on the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration, ICE and the EPA to investigate the allegations of undocumented workers being used, wondering if Enbridge "turned a blind eye" to the alleged use of undocumented workers by Hallmark.

He also used the allegations as a chance to take a jab at Enbridge for not using local workers in the cleanup effort.

"This situation should not have happened, and it is particularly troubling given the high unemployment rate in our state and the availability of hazmat-trained workers right here in Calhoun County that could be hired for these jobs," Schauer said in a statement. "Our workers have been turned away as undocumented workers were brought in on buses from Texas. Prior to these allegations, our community repeatedly asked the EPA and Enbridge to use local labor, and have been rebuffed in our efforts."

Also, Enbridge's test of a 13-mile section of its 6B pipeline on Monday was successful, Larson said Tuesday.

With regulators from the U.S. Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration present, company workers raised the pressure of water in the tested section, which runs from Marshall to Albion, for eight hours and found no leaks, she said.

The next step for Enbridge will be to review the test data and submit it to PHMSA in hopes of restarting the pipeline, which runs from Griffith, Ind., to Sarnia, Ontario, and has been shutdown since the spill.

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Katrina's Traumatic Impact Still Felt by Youth

By Joshua Philipp
Epoch Times Staff

Last Updated: Aug 31, 2010

Created: Aug 31, 2010



AFTERMATH: Shanika Reaux's children Da-Vone Lewis (C), 2, and O-Neil Lewis (R), 1, sit on a shopping cart while waiting for a bus May 10, 2006 in New Orleans, La. Children were particularly affected, mentally and emotionally, by Hurricane Katrina. (Mario Tama/Getty Images)

After suffering through the nation's second deadliest natural disaster in history, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, many youth in New Orleans still struggle mentally and emotionally. With additional job loss and environmental damage in the region due to the BP oil spill, the toll has become even heavier.

The emotional impact on youth has been showing in elementary and secondary school performance. After the storm, the number of students who were expelled or suspended from school rose to 17 times the national average, according to Juvenile and Justice Program of Louisiana Director Dana Kaplan.

"A number of the youth we work with have been witness to a great deal of violence," Kaplan said, adding that it has caused "a great deal of dysfunction in their lives, and those produce a lot of anger and depression."

Between Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, more than 1,956 people lost their lives and more than 800,000 residents were displaced from their homes.

Communities are slowly coming back together, homes are going back up, and people are returning, yet the mental health issues of those impacted by Katrina have largely gone unresolved.

"I think every child in New Orleans is suffering from some form of post-traumatic stress disorder, I think it's safe to say," Kaplan said. "Just across the board, there's been a real impact of the lack of funding for mental health services in the city."

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is defined as an anxiety triggered by a traumatic event. It can be caused by experiencing or witnessing something that causes intense fear, helplessness, or horror, according to the Mayo Clinic website.

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According to Marylee Orr, studies following Katrina found that “Seventy-five percent of the children in New Orleans had some form of post-traumatic stress,” she added that with the BP oil spill, “We’re finding that that’s happening again.”

As the executive director of the Louisiana Environmental Action Network and the Lower Mississippi Riverkeeper, Orr has been working extensively on issues related to environment and public health.

She said that in disaster relief training, “One of the things that was startling to me is that I hadn’t thought of the mental health effects of a disaster, and what it does, particularly to children.”

Families impacted by the BP oil spill may have a better chance of getting mental health care than those who were solely caught up in the Katrina disaster. On Aug. 16, BP announced it would provide \$15 million to the Louisiana state government for mental health services, which will fund services for an estimated six months.

Previous requests to BP for mental health funding by the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals went unanswered.

.....
*I think every child in
New Orleans is
suffering from some
form of post traumatic
stress disorder.*
.....

Dana Kaplan, youth program director. “Louisiana is facing an unprecedented behavioral health crisis as our families struggle with the devastating effects of the BP disaster on our coast,” said a letter to BP sent by Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Secretary Alan Levine.

“As you know, these same families have already endured multiple natural disasters, and have been forced to rebuild their lives, in some cases from nothing, to reclaim their livelihoods and their very

identity,” Levine said., “Now, they face the continued uncertainty as this catastrophic technological disaster continues to wreak havoc in our communities.”

An estimated 109,782 adults, and 84,497 children in New Orleans suffer from serious mental illness, according to a 2008-2009 study from the Louisiana Youth Enhanced Services. According to an Aug. 23, National Public Radio report, experts estimate the current population of New Orleans to be between the low 300,000 thousands and 400,000. This is down from the city’s pre-Katrina population of almost 500,000.

The study adds amid recovery and reconstruction in Louisiana, many children experienced PTSD symptoms, “though most may not meet all diagnostic criteria for PTSD, but have related traumatic

stress symptoms.”

The research also states that, “Certainly all the children in our area are coping with increased measures of stress, with traumatic stress being widespread in our area. Some factors exacerbate coping with traumatic stress for children and youth, such as poverty, dislocation, change in communities, families coping with stress, and female and minority status.”

According to Orr, job loss caused by the BP oil spill has added to the already difficult home life for many youths still coping with the effects of Katrina.

“A disaster effects the entire infrastructure of the family,” Orr said. “There’s a ripple effect when you have a disaster. It’s not just the disaster: it’s what happens after the disaster.”



August 31, 2010

Fight to ban lead in fishing tackle continues

Candidate, groups attack environmental petitions seeking change

Trevor Brown

CNHI Capital Bureau

OKLA. CITY — OKLAHOMA CITY — Politicians, anglers and environmentalists are taking sides over a petition to ban potentially toxic lead in fishing tackle.

On Friday, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ruled against considering a petition from the Center of Biological Diversity and other environmental groups to ban the production and distribution of lead hunting ammunition. Although many conservatives and Second Amendment advocates hailed the move as a victory, the EPA is still waiting to determine if it will take up the second part of the proposal that would outlaw lead in popular fishing sinkers.

Jeff Miller, a spokesman for the center, which is one of the five groups that filed the petition with the EPA, said lead-weighted lures that are left behind often are mistaken for food by many species of birds, and it can have deadly effects if consumed. The group estimates 10 million to 20 million birds and other animals die each year from lead poisoning in the United States.

"It is of special concern for birds with low population numbers or those that reproduce slowly," he said. "In New England and portions of the Midwest, lead poisoning is the No.1 cause of deaths for loons."

Scott Pruitt, the state Republican attorney general candidate, criticized the environmental groups for pushing for the lead restrictions through the EPA in both proposals. He said if he were elected he would seek legal action to prevent federal agencies from enacting the bans.

"I do believe it would be an overreach of the federal government," he said Monday while adding it should be up to states and elected officials, instead of the federal agency, to make the decision. "It is an example of how we need to be very vigilant and mindful of what is going on in Washington."

Jed Green, campaign manager for Democratic attorney general candidate Jim Priest, said the campaign has not looked deeply into the issue. But Green said he does not see the EPA seriously considering the lead fishing tackle ban. He also said the next attorney general should make sure he spends his time on the most pertinent issues.

"The priority of the attorney general is to protect the most vulnerable with the limited resources of the office," Green said.

Gary Stanton, owner of the Tackle Shack in Stillwater, said a ban on lead tackle would dramatically affect his business. He said the lead lures are his most popular, mainly because they are much cheaper than other types of materials. While acknowledging there might have to be a compromise to balance fishing and business interests with the concerns of the environmentalists, Stanton said he would like to see the issue decided on not just a national level.

"You need to have local people involved too," he said. "But once a decision has been made, it's up to

the (federal) government to oversee it.”

Kara Rowe, with Nabatak Outdoors, a bait and tackle store in Claremore, said she sees a mix of positive and negative outcomes if lead fishing equipment were to be banned.

“In our industry, many of our customers use the same products over and over again, and may not have an enthusiastic reception regarding their favorite sinker or lure being altered in any way,” she said. “However, we are also parents and grandparents and are very concerned with the conservation of what we are leaving for our children and grandchildren.”

A statement from the EPA said the agency would continue receiving public comments on the lead fishing tackle proposal until Sept. 15. Miller said he expects the agency to then decide whether it will consider the ban by Nov. 1.

Those wishing to comment specifically on the fishing tackle issue can do so by visiting www.regulations.gov.

TREVOR BROWN covers the Oklahoma statehouse for CNHI. He can be reached at tbrown@cnhi.com.



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Aug 31, 2010

Nissan starts selling all-electric Leaf sedan today

08:25 AM

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At long last, Nissan begins taking actual orders today for the first next-generation fully electric car from a major automaker, the Leaf.

More than 18,000 people who plunked down \$99 to stay on the reservations list will have first crack at turning their interest into an actual order for the all-electric, five-seat car. Orders will be taken online and Nissan is still taking reservations on [Leaf's web site](#). Even though now you can actually pay for one, deliveries won't start until December.

The car has a range of about 100 miles per charge.

Nissan has been having inspectors make home visits

and taking other steps to make sure customers will be able to recharge at home and likely be happy with the car.

The base level Leaf, the SV, is priced at \$33,720, Nissan says. It comes with a list of standard features, including cruise control and a navigation system. There is only one higher trim level, the SL, at \$33,720. The list of extras?:

It includes a spoiler with a solar panel, backup camera, the Homelink garage opener system, automatic on-off headlights, fog lights and a rear cargo cover. There is only one option: a \$700 quick-charge port that can recharge the Leaf on the road in as little as a half hour.

Leaf is eligible for federal tax credits that can reduce its cost to as little as \$25,280. It is also has lease options as low as \$349 a month for 36 months.

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CAPTION

By Don Ryan, AP

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Aug 31, 2010

Have environmentalists lost the climate-change fight?

08:58 AM

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Environmental groups, which failed to get a climate-change bill passed this year in the U.S. Senate, are having trouble getting their message heard on the campaign trail.

They tried to sound the alarm that they're losing the fight at two events last week in Wisconsin -- one dubbed a "Carnivoil" -- but didn't draw enough people to fill a high school gymnasium, reports *The Washington Post's* David Fahrenthold.



CAPTION

By Karen Bleier, AFP/Getty Images



CAPTION

By Karen Bleier, AFP/Getty Images

That's quite a contrast from a year ago when the House of Representatives passed a sweeping bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions despite [massive lobbying from the oil and gas industry](#).

Now, "even in the hottest year on record, even with a historic oil spill polluting the Gulf of Mexico, even with a Democratic Congress and a friendly White House, it ([green movement](#)) [couldn't win the fight it had picked](#). In fact, in the Senate it couldn't even start it," writes Fahrenthold.

Have environmentalists lost the fight for good?

Last month, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he wouldn't put the bill up for a vote, because it had no GOP support. The bill's prospects will likely deteriorate if Republicans gain seats, as expected, in the midterm elections.

"If it's not addressed in a lame-duck session of Congress, it will have been punted to the next generation," David Wasserman of the Cook Political Report tells *The Post*.

The green movement is scoring private-sector victories as more companies adopt energy-efficiency measures, homes

and commercial are constructed to meet green standards and [banks are reluctant to finance environmentally-risky projects](#).

The Environmental Protection Agency is also moving forward in setting limits on some sources of greenhouse gases, starting with auto tailpipes and then moving on to power plants and factories.

On Capitol Hill, however, environmentalists seem to have the toughest time.

"The oil industry has tremendous reach and control in the United States Senate," said David Di Martino, a spokesman for Clean Energy Works, a coalition of more than 60 groups that includes such big names as the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund, in the *Post* story. "Our mistake was miscalculating . . . how far into the Senate it went."

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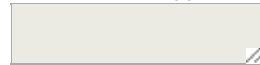
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The environmentalists have no more lost the battle against the fossil fuel industry over climate change than the doctors have lost the battle over obesity against the junk food industry and the scientists have lost the battle over tobacco smoking against the tobacco industry. Just look at the lady firing the squirt gun in the top picture for your answer about the obesity battle.

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Yes, THANK GOD!



Electricity storage capability taking massive leap

August 31st, 2010 8:24 am CT

By **Colonel Mason**, Dallas County Environmental News Examiner

Superconducting magnetic coil technology to solve electricity storage problems, leaving battery advances in the dust

DALLAS, Aug. 31, 2010. The senior director of marketing and government affairs for [SuperPower](#), Trudy Lehner, announced today that it is one of three organizations being funded by the US Department of Energy (DOE) to co-develop advanced Superconducting Magnetic Energy Storage systems (SMES). "This is something that isn't yet available," said Lehner, "a very aggressive project."

The funding of \$4.2 million is coming as a grant from the DOE's bold new arm, the Advanced Research Project Agency – Energy (ARPA-E), to three organizations working together, ABB, Brookhaven National Labs and SuperPower, a manufacturer of superconducting wire, together with SuperPower's R&D group at the University of Houston.

"We all know that renewable energy has a very large focus, not only in the US, but around the world," said Lehner. "But the problem is that when that energy from wind or from solar is generated, it is not always at the same time it is needed by users. So we need ways to be able to store that energy. SMES will be able to store much larger amounts of energy than batteries and for longer periods of time."

This is novel technology, storing electricity from the power grid in the magnetic field of a coil that is made of superconducting wire with near zero loss of energy. Lehner made her dramatic announcement by phone from her office in Schenectady, NY, on the ScienceNews Radio Network program, the [Promise of Tomorrow with Colonel Mason](#). "This is certainly a game-changer," a surprised Mason can be heard to respond, "we always thought the only solution was going to come from batteries and have been disappointed with their being so slow to develop." The broadcast originates in Dallas, Texas, and can now be heard at the website, archived for its world audience.

Lehner admitted that the wire is currently quite costly, but said they are working with the University of Houston in developing a new type of wire to bring down the price.

The three year project will develop a 20 KW ultra high field SMES device targeting a capacity up to 3.4 mega-joules at a field of about 30 Tesla, operating at around 4.2 degrees Kelvin. It will have "instantaneous dynamic response and a near infinite cycle life," said Lehner.

These dramatic advances will be a main attraction next month when the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) unveils its world energy conference, styled [Innovative Technologies for an Efficient and Reliable Electricity Supply](#), at a hotel in Boston September 27 – 29. The public is welcome to

attend by registering at the website.

About IEEE:

IEEE (www.ieee.org) is the world's largest professional association dedicated to advancing technological innovation and excellence for the benefit of humanity, with 400,000 members worldwide. [IEEE-USA](http://www.ieeeusa.org) (www.ieeeusa.org) advances the public good and promotes the careers and public policy interests of more than 210,000 engineers, scientists and allied professionals who are U.S. members of IEEE.

Tags: [green energy](#)

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Cypress Creek Basin survey is completed

Posted: Tuesday, August 31, 2010 8:12 am

Terri Richardson Marshall News Messenger |

JEFFERSON - Caddo Lake Watershed stakeholders met Monday afternoon for the last time with Epsey Consultants Inc. as it has concluded its survey and modeling of the Cypress Creek Basin to best identify the sources and solutions to pollution there.

"I think it went well. I think the stakeholders provided concerns for data used in the model," said Lee Thomas, team leader for Northeast Texas Municipal Water District and coordinator of the Watershed Protection Plan for the Cypress Creek Basin.

"It is an adaptive plan. So we use the best data available to us and one part of the plan will identify where we can use better actual data instead of assumptions," said Thomas. "Models use assumptions and the data will become available as we track things like poultry litter. There are a number of things which will continue to evolve with the plan."

The meeting was at the tourism center with about 40 in attendance.

"I think it was good that the stakeholders got to express their concerns about the data because that will go into the plan itself," said Thomas. "We can implement and monitor preliminary best management practices now, and we did have a lot of stakeholder involvement; we got some input."

Thomas was impressed by the number of experts who gathered to exchange their wisdom in one field or another and all with concerns for the effort for developing the best possible model of the Caddo Lake Watershed.

"It's good to have people with different expertise, with different fields," said Thomas. "Models are only as good as the data which goes in, program that puts out an assumption based on the data provided. As this process continues we will have more data available. We are monitoring with the Clean Rivers Program to monitor water quality looking for water quality problems since 1998 and we continue to collect data almost daily."

Data revealed in the draft plan was recently re-calibrated as more data was revealed in June, well after the initial deadline for additional information was to be received. Its use, however, has made many differences in the way the model was concluded.

"There's still some issues. We've had to do the best we can with the data provided," said Kendra Riebschleager with Epsey Consultants. "And when it comes time to implement (practices) on people's properties, they have the right to choose which (practices) are put into place."

In the series of E. coli bacteria load reduction goals, five impaired segments were identified including South Lilly Creek with an 87 percent reduction goal and an average concentration of bacteria at 253.6 per 100 mL.

The standard is 126 colonies per 100 mL or lower as set by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Other streams are any of three sections of Little Cypress Creek with the first at 84 percent reduction and 288.7 concentration, the second at 72 percent reduction and 186.4 concentration and the third has a 74 percent reduction goal at 157.3 concentration.

Black Cypress Bayou has a 22 percent reduction goal with a 130.6 average concentration and James' Bayou was found to need 43 percent bacteria reduction and has a 151.8 concentration average, according to the draft plan prepared by Espey Consultants.

Each stream segment was broken down again with sections identifying the sources for the pollution and corresponding best management practices recommended for remedying these in each area. The biggest cause of bacteria in streams was cattle operations (manure).

In addition to plans for decreasing bacteria were those for decreasing nutrient loads in the water which affect the level of dissolved oxygen, needed for wildlife in streams.

"It's more important to analyze up stream and at the source," said Tim Osting for Espey Consultants. "How much nutrient reduction is needed to achieve the goal dissolved oxygen?"

As the final meeting with Espey was still being held, there was an apparent effort being made to help the stakeholders get comfortable with the data and models used in the study, said Rick Loweree, president of the Caddo Lake Institute.

"It's not 100 percent accurate, but it's better than zero. This is the first cut at the kinds of steps that need to be taken by people in agriculture and people with septic tanks to get the pollution problems remedied," said Loweree. "The model is questioned because it applies better to West and Central Texas streams. We always try to find a one-size fits all formula, but it will always work best where it is developed."

The Caddo Lake Watershed Protection Plan did achieve a major milestone in gathering stakeholders from throughout the Cypress Creek Basin to address pollution issues there, including several state agencies like the Texas Forest Service, Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality as well as individuals and agriculture operators from the area.

"We have a broad cross section, which is important because this is a voluntary process. Even if we were perfectly accurate on all of it, we couldn't force anybody to participate in the best management practices," said Loweree. "There is federal money available if we have a plan that shows what we need to get done. Once we get the plan approved by the (Environmental Protection Agency), then their money can flow here for solutions."

The funding would go to help people commit to the best management practices and also be a boon to the local economy. The next phase is for education and monitoring as stakeholders begin to use the practices.

Incentives and cost share benefits will be offered to stakeholders who use the practices, Thomas said.

"We have to come up with another pot of money to move on to the next phase," said Loweree. "It is a bit of an adaptive process. Hopefully all people will want to see water quality improvement so we don't see the kind of problems we see at Lake O' the Pines, so we can make it safe by reducing pollution."

Main players which will continue to propagate the education, monitoring and benefits programs will be: Northeast Texas Municipal Water District, Caddo Lake Institute, TCEQ and the EPA.

BEAUTY IN THE BARREN

Photographer highlights beauty of Tar Creek Superfund Site

By NIKKI PATRICK

The Morning Sun

Posted Aug 30, 2010 @ 10:55 PM

PITTSBURG — Most reporters and photographers stressed the dismal, desolate aspects of the Tar Creek Superfund Site in Oklahoma, around Picher and Carden.

Vaughn Wascovich, however, has literally focused on finding beauty in the landscape in a photo series he call “The Tar Creek Project.” These photos are on exhibit now through Sept. 30 in the Harry Krug Gallery, Porter Hall, Pittsburg State University.

Wascovich is an assistant professor at Texas A&M University/Commerce, and is also currently a Visiting Scholar with the Harvard School of Public Health. He started taking photographs when he was 13, and worked 20 years as a commercial photographer before becoming a teacher at the university level.

He spoke Monday about Tar Creek, an area heavily polluted by more than 80 years of mining activity.

“Tar Creek is 40 square miles contaminated by lead, arsenic and heavy metals,” Wascovich said. “About 95 percent of the lead used in World Wars I and II came from there.”

While the mines were working, they had to be constantly pumped to keep them dry. After the mines were abandoned, they filled with water.

“The water is filled with lead, which is really bad for you,” Wascovich said. “There are cave-ins and holes that are 200 to 300 feet deep. When you look into a hole and can’t see the bottom, it’s scary. When I’d go there to photograph, I’d have nightmares about falling in one of those holes.”

He hasn’t, but had at least one scare.

“I was walking around one time with a video crew and the land dropped three feet,” Wascovich said. “Have you ever said a prayer in a millisecond?”

Even the ground around the homes was dangerously contaminated, posing a special threat to children.

“The guys at Harvard were wondering why the kids had such high levels of lead in them,” he said. “It’s because kids were out there playing in the dirt. They tried yard remediation, stripping off the contaminated dirt and replacing it with clean topsoil. That worked until it rained or the wind blew, then the dirt was dirty again.”

He said he heard about the area from a student, and started the project in 2002. He already had an interest in mining because his grandfathers were coal miners in Pennsylvania.

On his first visit there he went into a bar and began talking to people.

“The woman bartender said, ‘Don’t make our town look ugly’,” he said. “She told me that, in the winter with the snow covering the chat piles, Picher is one of the most beautiful places on earth.”

The woman bartender went on to tell Wascovich that she walked home at 2 a.m. without worry, that nobody living in Picher bothered to lock their doors.

“There weren’t architectural treasures there,” he said. “What we’re losing there is a community that is disappearing before our eyes.”

The photographer came to cherish the time he spent with the Tar Creek area residents.

“There was one man, Hoppy Ray, who ran a pool hall and he’d put photos up on his wall,” Wascovich said. “I’ve been in a lot of exhibits, but I was more proud to have my photos on Hoppy’s wall than anywhere else.”

Picher residents eventually received federal checks enabling them to relocate. There were still those who wanted to stay, but the town was struck by a deadly tornado in May 2008. Wascovich believes that devastation will probaby mean the end of Picher. It will live on in the memories of those who called it home, and in the photos where he captured the beauty of the Tar Creek area.

“If I could get you to see how beautiful the world is, you would be tingling all day long,” Wascovich said. “That’s my job, to show you how beatiful the world is.”

“The Tar Creek Project” will be open free to the public from 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday. Anyone needing additional information about the exhibit may contact S. Portico Bowman, gallery director, at 235-4305, or visit www.pittstate.edu/art.

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Aug 30, 2010

Pedal power takes off as exercise produces electricity

09:51 PM

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Pedal power is gaining traction as thousands of bikes and elliptical machines are retrofitted to produce electricity.

Gyms are using sweat equity to help power their facilities. A Brooklyn eatery uses it to make smoothies. Female inmates at a Phoenix jail pedal to power their TV to watch soap operas. Actor Ed Begley Jr. bikerides a bike to run his toaster.

"Business is really taking off," says [Jay Whelan, CEO of The Green Revolution](#), a Connecticut-based



CAPTION

By Stan Honda, AFP/Getty Images

company that

retrofits bikes for spinning classes. Since April 2009, he has added devices to nearly 1,000 bikes at 60 gyms that convert the direct current created by pedaling into alternating current to be sent to the power grid. Most of his customers are on the West or East Coast or in Canada. The average cost: about \$1,000 per bike.

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[ReRev, a Florida-based company](#), has added similar devices to more than 300 elliptical trainers at 23 gyms, mostly at universities, in a dozen states since June 2008. Eleven of those facilities, mostly universities, were retrofitted this year in Pennsylvania, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Arkansas, Texas, Arizona and Oregon.

"It's a low-cost way to get into the renewable energy game," says Beth Bennion, ReRev's marketing director. She says the novelty also attracts users. She asks, "Who would ever have thought we'd capture energy from a workout?"

Pedal power cannot run factories, but Whelan estimates a spinning class of 20 people over a year could light 72 homes for a month. ReRev says a 30-minute workout on one of its ellipticals generates about 50 watts, enough to run a laptop for an hour or charge a cellphone six times.

"We're not going to solve global warming, but we're trying to help in any way we can," Whelan says.

At the Habana Outpost restaurant in Brooklyn, N.Y., it takes about a minute of bike pedaling to power a blender. "You



CAPTION

By Stan Honda, AFP/Getty Images

get \$1 off if you pedal your own smoothie," says Elvis Rosa, a manager. Most customers saddle up.

"It's been a wild success," says the Rev. Faith Fowler, executive director of Cass Community Social Services, which runs a homeless shelter in Detroit. She got a donation to retrofit [10 bikes at the shelter's gym](#) to provide some of its electricity. She says she pursued the idea for both environmental and health reasons, noting that many residents struggle with diabetes and obesity.

"It was a natural fit," she says. As a result, she says the residents became so much more eco- and health-minded that they began growing organic produce.

"It's a huge motivator," says Leah Loeffert, a government consultant who takes a spinning class at Washington Sports Club in the nation's capital.

Loeffert says the bike, by telling her how much power she produces, pushes her to work harder. She says she likes doing something for the environment and because she lives in a condo, she can't buy rooftop solar panels.

Maricopa County, Ariz., Sheriff Joe Arpaio sees such bikes as a solution for couch potatoes. In April, to get overweight inmates to exercise, he hooked one up to a TV in the women's section of his Tent City jail in Phoenix. The 19-inch TV works only if an inmate pedals.

All the [women in that section of the jail signed up for the "pedal-vision program](#)," he says. "Give them access to their favorite soaps and cop shows," he says, "and they'll pedal till the cows come home."

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